Bruckman, A. (2002). The Future of E-Learning Communtities. Communications of the ACM, 45(4), 60-63.

Book Metaphor Computer

Learning through reading involves more than a student and a book. The book is a technology that exists in a social context. Together, the book, the student, the teacher, and other expert and novice readers the student encoun- ters form a socio-technical system (a combination of technologies, people, and social practices). If well designed, that system may support learning.

Importance o Software Choices

Just as it matters which books students read, it matters which Internet software they use. And it matters what activities and social practices surround the process of Internet use in schools and at home.

have yet to invest in some of the most important components for making Internet technology support learning—how to best use this technology in the classroom, innovative software tools for learning, and training teachers to learn those best practices as they come to be better understood.

Online learners

In online research projects, information is retrieved. In more innovative work, information is gathered by students and shared.

Groups of online learners can motivate and support one another’s learning experiences.

Constructionism is a theory of education that advocates learning through design and construction activities [5]. There is a natural fit between this approach to education and the affordances of net technology.

Learning from peers can be a compelling experience, and is scalable.

Learning is fundamentally a social process, and the Internet has a unique potential to facilitate new kinds of learning relationships.

Peers can be a powerful resource for children’s learning, if activities are structured to promote productive interactions.

Children learn from one another, and from one another’s projects. That support is not just technical, but emotional. In answering a question, one child may tell another, “I got confused by that at first, too.” The online community provides a ready source of role models.

Finally, the online community provides an appreciative audience for completed work. Students get excited about being creative in order to share their work with their peers.

Evolution of Technology

Culture and technology coevolve. Computer professionals catalyze this process. The artifacts we create foster new social practices—whether we intend them to or not. The challenge as we move forward is to develop a vision of what is possible; to understand the more and less desirable outcomes, and try to steer in the right direction.

Finally, we need to view learning as fundamentally a social process. The Internet has unique affordances to sup- port the creation of new communities of learners. Its power lies not in delivering content, but in creating a context for mutually supportive communities of learners to form.